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MEETING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published A ***Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Health Services in the United States*** in 2002. This document, spearheaded by Dr. Richard Jackson, provides an excellent framework for rejuvenating environmental health services. Governor Schwarzenegger has recently appointed Dr. Jackson as the State's Health Officer in the Department of Health Services. The Governor is also in the process of reorganizing the entire state government through the California Performance Review.

Jim Hinch of the **Orange County Register** reported

"A team of bureaucrats picked by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is quietly preparing a comprehensive reorganization of state government larger than any attempted in California history. The plan, expected to be complete by April 30, would close down whole departments and consolidate others. Up to 200 state boards and commissions and 1,500 political appointees would be eliminated. Administration officials declined to specify reorganization proposals. But interviews with those who have been briefed or interviewed by planners suggest several likely recommendations:

- Consolidate most energy regulation under a newly created energy secretary picked by the governor. Regulation now resides in various appointed, semi-independent commissions.
- Create a new Department of Public Health, which would coordinate various prevention, advocacy and information programs. Eliminate a statewide health-planning department.
- Consolidation of the Department of Corrections and the California Youth Authority into a single prisons department. Close several prisons."

This undertaking will restructure state government and may be seen as an opportunity for environmental health to gain a prominent place in state government and consolidate the fractionalized aspects of our profession. However, until that happens we will continue to work toward the goals established in the 2003 draft strategic plan for the registration program, **Shaping the Future of the Registered Environmental Health Program**. Five strategic initiatives were identified in the strategic plan and form the foundation for the future of the REHS program. In the following discussion I have detailed the actions the Program has taken in the past year to meet the goals of the strategic plan.

I Develop Educational Strategies for Environmental Health Protection:

Educational Programs:

The university review team conducted a site review of CSU, San Bernardino in October 2003. The Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee approved the final report on March 30, 2004. We completed the university site review at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) with team members from the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee: Arturo Aguirre, Donna Gurule, and Susan Empey. The draft CSUN report is circulating among the review team members for their input. Loma Linda University is scheduled for a site visit April 28, 2004. They have already submitted their survey information to the Registration Program. CSU, Fresno will be sent a survey requesting information about their program, curriculum, and faculty in April with a site review planned for the fall semester. We approved proposed courses of study for Option III and IV at UCLA and CSU, Fullerton in June 2003. A review panel to evaluate the relevance of the statutorily required courses in light of the results from the Job Analysis is planned for May 2004.

Training Programs

We begin the process to update and review county training plans in February 2004. A excel spreadsheet to tract Environmental Health Specialist Trainees throughout the State is in draft form. The **Environmental Health Specialist Checklist** for trainees clarifies the statutory language

regarding hours and training elements. We designed a Training Plan for environmental health practitioners that work for the State to become registered. A forum was established for Training Coordinators to share training techniques and ideas, the first meetings were in December 2003 in northern California; a subsequent meeting was held at the CEHA ASE in Pasadena on March 30, 2004.

II Develop Effective Recruitment Approaches for the Environmental Health Profession:

On March 3, 2004 I made a presentation at the Calaveras High School career center on the environmental health profession to a group of high school juniors and seniors. The power point presentation is available for interested jurisdictions for high school and community college recruitment. We are in the process of establishing a web page with presentations for recruitment and public awareness that are downloadable for individuals and counties to use in their localities.

III Develop a Public Relations Approach to Environmental Health Profession:

We look forward to increasing public awareness of environmental health issues and the value of registered environmental health specialists in the delivery of environmental health to all Californians by working with CEHA, CCDEH and interested individuals in universities, public and private practice.

IV Develop Administration Programs for Environmental Health Enhancement:

Job Analysis Questionnaire

We worked with CPS Human Resources, CEHA, CCDEH and other interested parties to develop and distribute the Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ). Preliminary results from the JAQ are available and were presented at the CEHA AES in Pasadena. This analysis allows us to determine the essential knowledge and skills currently used in the profession. Information from the Job Analysis will be used to develop a description of the occupation, revise the REHS exam and enhance training and university programs. A Subject Matter Expert (SME) panel met in April and made the relevant linkages between the job tasks and the knowledge and skills needed to perform those tasks. The linkages form the basis for the test plan and the test plan forms the framework for development of a new comprehensive REHS exam.

Examinations

The March exam was held March 19th 2004. The exams are held three times a year simultaneously in Los Angeles and Sacramento: the next exams are scheduled for July 16th and November 19th. There are currently 3,666 registered environmental health specialists in California of which ~340 are retired.

V Develop forums/linkages with Organizations/Agencies to Promote Awareness of Environmental Health Protection:

We have established a list server to improve communication within the profession. UC Berkeley Center for Infectious Disease Preparedness has posted a message to the list regarding epidemiology training that was available in April. We intend to focus more attention in the future on developing and maintaining strong relationships with organizations that have similar goals.